

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Donna Newell and I'm the proud owner/operator of Shady Creek Gardens and have been for the past 25 years. We are a small, seasonal business located in Omak, WA.

Eric Hendrikson, a mitigation social worker, stopped by the nursery on May 22, 2019, to get a sense of our establishment and to inquire whether I'd be interested in having a volunteer work at the nursery. He explained to me that he had a "client" that loved plants and needed some community involvement and some structure in his life. Eric explained to me that his client was not violent, was autistic and was in need of this diversion. It was evident that Eric was sincerely passionate and knowledgeable about his client and what supports he would need.

I agreed to meet his client, Jaydin, the next day. Eric and Jaydin came to the nursery to look around. It was immediately evident that Jaydin had a deep love of plants and he was well prepared for his informal interview. Eric explained to me the charges against Jaydin. I emphatically do not condone the conduct that got him in trouble.

I liked Jaydin's demeanor and quickly agreed to the volunteer arrangement. One of my great joys in life is to help people, especially vulnerable people that may have few advantages going for them. I am a mother to 3 and grandmother of 5 and most identify in those roles.

Jaydin began work soon after and I found him to be prompt and communicative. He was assigned many jobs that were dirty and hot. He never complained and worked diligently and smilingly at all times. He was very kind and attentive when given constructive criticism and showed improvement afterward. He was very good at letting me know if he had appointments or other things that would make him late for work or unable to work a particular day. He worked through most of our 2019 season.

I am interested in having Jaydin volunteer again when we are able to reopen fully. If I or my business can help him live a better life- I'm all in. Plants and caring for them are so therapeutic. I hear that from most of my customers and am so compelled to nurture plants and to share my passion with people in hopes of nurturing them.

To close, I'm offering my support for Jaydin because I feel he has so much potential. I feel he needs guidance and nurturing rather than punishment. This is a program I would like to be involved in moving forward. I was inspired from the beginning.

Donna Newell  
Shady Creek Gardens & Ponds

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